State Licensing Board Meeting

The Arizona State Board of Technical Registration will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, September 26. Access meeting information here.

AZ Ranks in Top 10 for Construction Employment Increase

Construction employment increased in 45 states and the District of Columbia in July from a year earlier, while 27 states added construction employees from June to July, according to a new analysis of federal employment data released by the Associated General Contractors of America.

Association officials said recent job gains would be more widespread if government officials helped more people prepare for construction careers. Arizona ranks No. 6 for adding the most construction jobs (1,200), and No. 9 for the biggest construction employment increase by percentage (0.9%). Read more.

Long-Term Energy Storage Pilot Project Comes to Phoenix

Salt River Project (SRP) and CMBlu Energy have announced a pilot project called Desert Blume that will provide long-duration energy storage in the Phoenix area. Desert Blume will use non-lithium battery storage to house 5 megawatts, or 10 hours, of energy, Environment+Energy Leader reports.

Designer and manufacturer of long-duration energy systems, CMBlu, was selected by SRP largely for its sustainable approach to energy storage. The company's Organic SolidFlow battery uses solid and water-based electrolytes with high energy density instead of rare materials often used in batteries, such as lithium and cobalt. The technology allows for a fully recyclable system that may be safely housed inside buildings. The cost-effective technology can store and deliver energy for two to three times longer per cycle than traditional lithium-ion technology, according to the company.
The battery storage system will help SRP, a not-for-profit utility serving the Phoenix area, as they work towards a low-carbon resource portfolio. Read more.

**UArizona Researchers to Study Inclusive STEM Learning Environments**

A new University of Arizona fellowship program will focus on how to build more inclusive learning environments for high school and college students in science, technology, engineering and math fields.

The first cohort of the Research on Educational Equity and Diversity in STEM Postdoctoral Fellowship program began this summer, according to a news release. The four postdoctoral researchers in the REEDS program, all from the College of Education, will learn skills to help them bring their research and teaching to communities that have largely gone underrepresented in STEM disciplines, including students of color, women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and first-generation college students.

The program is funded by a $1.25 million grant from the National Science Foundation, which will fund the four fellows for the next two years. The program is one of many that contribute to the university’s mission as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, a federal designation the university received in 2018. HSIs are institutions with an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 25% Hispanic, and HSIs are eligible for certain federal grants to support those students. The US Department of Education reviews the designation annually. Read more.

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NSPE provides the tools PEs need to keep current in the profession and advance their careers.

**Featured Jobs**

*Power Delivery Principal Engineer*
Workability Webinars Series to Focus on Emerging Tech

NSPE offers a live webinar series free to members—“WORKability Wednesdays”—to support members with their professional development goals. The first webinar of this season took place on September 13 - How New PFAS Regulations Will Impact Water and Wastewater Utilities. A webinar on What Utilities Want Fleets to Know About Moving to Electric Vehicles will take place on September 27.

NSPE members get free access to the webinars, but must register to attend. Visit the PE Institute to review the full series line-up and to mark your calendar for these live, online events.

Registration Open: 2023 NSPE Women’s Leadership Virtual Fall Symposium

Join us for these live, one-time events to hear from experts in the field and join your colleagues in important discussions organized by NSPE’s Women Leadership Program Task Force: The Cost of Leadership; Leading Yourself: Learning to Increase Your Emotional Intelligence; and Networking Strategies: An Unconventional Approach to Connecting with Others. The webinars will take place on October 12, October 19, and October 26 at 1:00 p.m. (ET). This exclusive package is free and includes all three live, one-time sessions. The sessions will not be recorded and PDH credits will not be issued for them.

Register now.

#NSPECon23 Revisited

NSPECon23 provided an opportunity to learn and build community in the heart of Louisville, Kentucky. Find photos from the All Things Louisville reception, the first-
time attendee mixer, PE Day celebrations, recognition and installation ceremonies, and more on NSPE’s Flickr account. Relive the fun and excitement with all your PE peers that gathered to celebrate the engineering profession.

Save the Date: NSPECon24—Raleigh, North Carolina—August 7–9
A False Solution for Our Workforce Challenges

The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) recently posted an opinion column that highlights the risks of weakening professional licensing requirements to address workforce challenges. NSPE is a member of ARPL.

Workforce shortages, talent pipelines at a trickle and expensive labor are all-too-familiar challenges facing businesses and the public sector. In an attempt to tackle these problems, there is a growing trend of exploring the weakening or elimination of certain key job requirements. These proposals include getting rid of college degree requirements without equivalency alternatives, doing away with requisite testing, and downgrading credentials and licensure for professionals.

To be sure, there are some elements of the occupational licensure process that require continuous improvement and elimination of impediments disparately impacting underrepresented groups. However, in the rush to address workforce challenges, legislators and other policymakers must be cautious not to create new problems that leave employers and the public at risk.

Weakening professional licensing requirements is a false solution to various workforce ills. Minimum qualifications ensured by licensing exist to protect employers and the public they serve. This is particularly important for technical professions with high public impact, such as architecture, certified public accountancy, engineering, landscape architecture and land surveying. Care must be taken to ensure that critical licensing systems for such professions, designed to ensure public and economic protection, are not compromised and swept up in broad-brush calls for occupational licensing reform. Read more.